

**Biodiversity Conservation & Economic Growth  
(BCEG) Project**

**QUARTERLY REPORT**

*August-October 2001*

*Submitted by:*

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**ARD, Inc.**

**Bulgaria Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project**

is a collaborative initiative between the

**United States Agency for International Development**

and the

**Government of the Republic of Bulgaria**

implemented by

**Associates in Rural Development, Inc.**

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*Acronyms*

ARD	Associates in Rural Development, Inc.
AOP	Annual Operational Plan
BAS	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
BCEG	Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth Project
BSBCP	Bulgarian-Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program
CBNP	Central Balkan National Park
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
COM	Council of Ministers
CPT	Core Planning Team
CRP	Contract Results Package
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EEA	Executive Environmental Agency
EU	European Union
FLAG	Firm Level Assistance Group
FY	Financial year
GEF	Global Environment Facility (note the acronym “GEF” is also generically in Bulgaria for the USAID/GEF Biodiversity project)
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOB	Government of Bulgaria
GPS	Global Positioning System
HEC	Higher Expert Council
HQ	Headquarters
IQC	Indefinite Quantities Contract
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes and practices
LOE	Level of effort
MOAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
MOE	Ministry of Economy
MOEW	Ministry of Environment and Waters
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Management Plan
NEPF	National Environmental Protection Fund
NET	National Eco-Trust
NFMTF	National-level Financial Mechanisms Task Force

NGO	Non-Government Organization
NNPS	National Nature Protection Service (of MOEW)
NP	National Park
NPD	National Park Directorate
NTNR	Non-Timber Natural Resources
PA	Protected Area(s)
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PR	Public Relations
REA	Rapid Ecological Assessment
RM	Rila Monastery
RNP	Rila National Park
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TA	Technical assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## *Preface*

The Biodiversity Conservation and Economic Growth (BCEG) Project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID), as part of its strategic support to the Republic of Bulgaria. The Project is sponsored by USAID in conjunction with the Government of Bulgaria – the Ministry of Environment and Waters (MOEW). The Project is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two governments, and its implementation covers the period: May 2000 – October 2002.

This Project is a logical evolution of earlier USAID assistance to biodiversity conservation in the country. It follows some 10 years of assessment, technical assistance and financing of Bulgaria's biodiversity conservation strategic development, new protected areas legislation, and new national park institutions. The Project is designed to capitalize on the achievements of the Bulgaria Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Biodiversity Project (implemented during the period June 1995-April 2000), and builds on lessons learned.

The BCEG Project addresses six specific contract themes known as “contract result packages”. The BCEG Project includes the finalization and implementation of two national park management plans, the development of a new management plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park. It assists in the development of financial mechanisms and strategies to ensure the solvency of national parks. The Project pilots economic growth activities with select target groups around two Bulgarian national parks. And it continues to build on the principles of strong public information and awareness as stepping stones for informed public engagement and promotion of biodiversity conservation and protected area management activities.

This Project is issued as a Task Order (Contract Number LAG-I-00-99-00013-00) under the USAID Global Biodiversity and Forestry Indefinite Quantities Contract (IQC); and is implemented on behalf of USAID by Associates in Rural Development, (ARD) Inc., of Burlington, Vermont, USA.

The Project is implemented through a Project Management Unit (PMU) based in Sofia, and includes a Team Leader, three Bulgarian technical specialists, and support staff. Project activities are coordinated through two mechanisms –

- (a) Project Counterpart Team – PMU staff and MOEW/NNPS counterparts
- (b) Project Coordination Group – that serves as a steering committee for Project planning and monitors implementation. This consists of the National Nature Protection Service of the MOEW, and national park directors, the PMU and USAID.

The Project is largely implemented through the Directorates for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks. Additional technical assistance is provided by Bulgarian and international consultants, and is based on specific terms of reference.

## 1.0 Introduction

BCEG Project activities are guided by a life of project work plan, implemented through an annual work plan. Reports regarding progress are required quarterly. At the time of submitting this quarterly report, the BCEG Annual Work Plan for May 2001 through April 2002, was not yet approved by USAID.

USAID manages this contract using two mechanisms – a project officer or Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) based in Washington D.C., and through the USAID Bulgaria's Environment and Natural Resources Specialist, attached to the Mission's program unit. The Project remains one of USAID Bulgaria's "Special Initiatives and Cross-cutting Programs".

This quarterly report covers the three-month period, **August – October, 2001**. It also covers the first 100 days of the new administration of the Government of Bulgaria.

This reporting period is characterized by:

- Reproduction, distribution and translations of the National Park Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks. Distribution was accompanied by a ranger training in Central Balkan National Park.
- The initiation and implementation of a dozen park projects identified in the Park Management Plans, and described in the Annual Operations Plans for capital development, training and infrastructure;
- Two major marketing and public relations events in support of ecotourism pilot sites, national parks, and communities;
- Orientation and preparation of 12 study tour participants to the United States under a USAID TRANSIT grant.
- Completion of the NTNR situation analysis, resource assessment and development of management options for sustainable, non-timber natural resource management. This was accompanied by a presentation of results to Government;
- Preliminary formation of a national task force on financial mechanisms for national parks and development of a concept paper and management mechanism for a National Parks Fund.
- Rila Monastery Nature Park management planning team (16 institutions) nears its final composition with all but the Holy Synod and Monastery confirming participation; Rila Monastery Forestry Reserve status undergoes scrutiny of Government at request of Abbot.
- Intensive ecological and socio-economic assessments were carried out by interdisciplinary teams of botanists, zoologists, ecologists, and sociologists in Bulgaria's first-ever Rapid Ecological Assessments. Results serve as the basis for management planning decisions.
- Three international consultant visits - Professor Donald Hawkins on Ecotourism and Dr. Steve Dennison on Rila Monastery Nature Park, and Mr. Jared Hardner on NTNRs and financial mechanisms;

The Work Plan and Quarterly report format continues to reflect six contract results packages (CRP) – or distinct project themes. These include:

- Contract Result Package 1*    Finalize Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks, and deliver to the Council of Ministers
- Contract Result Package 2*    Effective Management and Priority Actions of Management Plans Supported
- Contract Result Package 3*    Park-related eco-enterprises demonstrated for ecotourism and natural, non-timber resources collection
- Contract Result Package 4*    Mechanism for National Park Financial Sustainability Established
- Contract Result Package 5*    Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Prepared
- Contract Result Package 6*    Public Awareness and Promotion Campaigns Implemented

Additional planning and reporting themes include: Project management and Administration, Networking and Partnerships, and Special Project Issues.

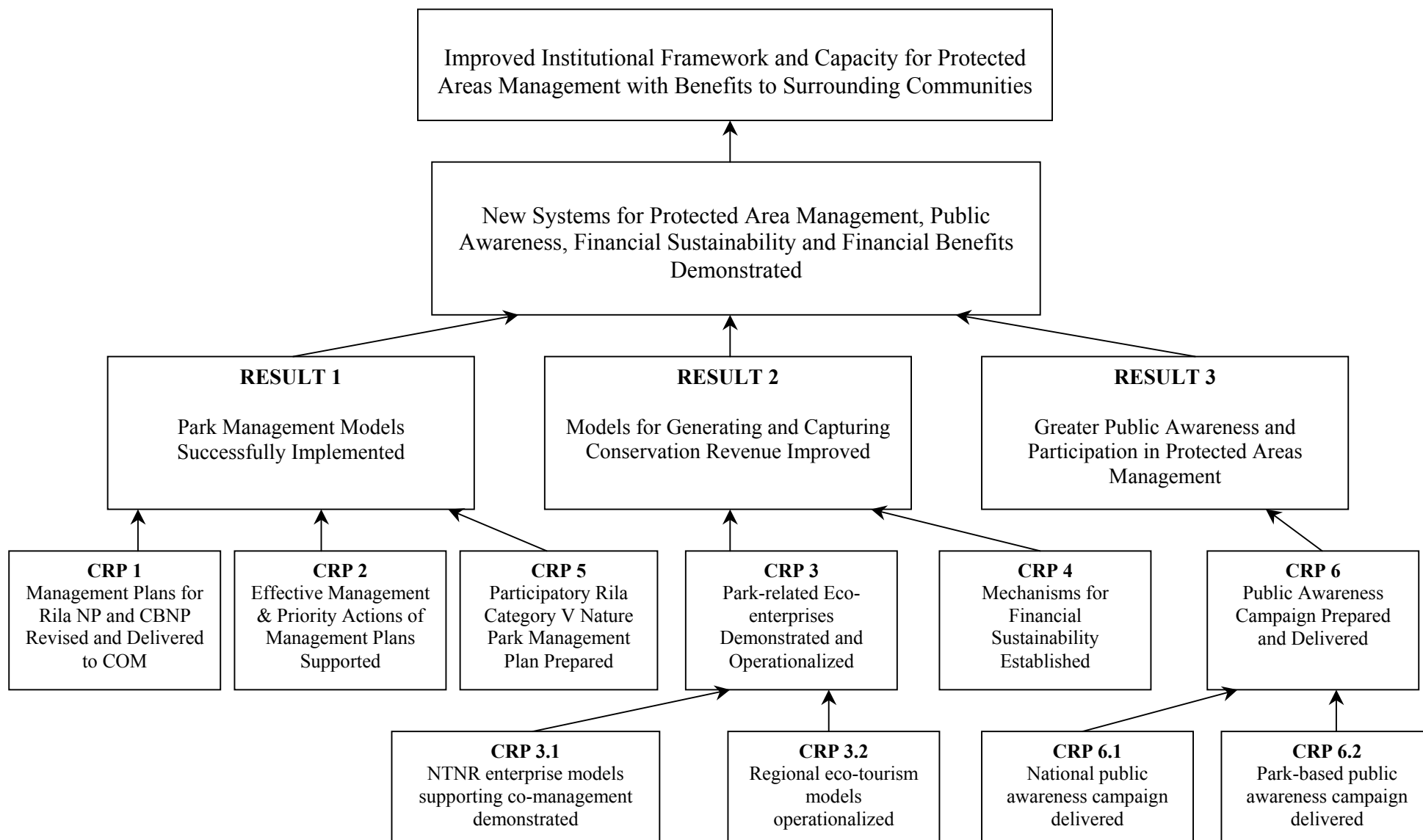
## 2.0 Results Framework

The aim of the Project is to contribute to the improved institutional framework and capacity for protected areas management in Bulgaria with benefits to communities surrounding key protected area sites. A secondary objective is to demonstrate new systems for protected areas management, public awareness, financial sustainability and financial benefits. In order to achieve this hierarchy of objectives, the Project supports three direct results, or outcomes:

- Park management models are successfully implemented;
- Models for generating and capturing biodiversity conservation revenue are improved; and,
- Greater public awareness and participation is demonstrated in protected areas management

Project reporting is guided by the six results packages. Each quarterly reports uses the six results packages as the basis for a report on activities covered by the reporting period, quantifies results/activities, and identifies constraints to achievement of project targets. Finally, each result package includes recommendations for actions or amendments to work plan implementation that will guide activities during the following quarter, and/or life of project activities.



**Figure 2.1 Results Framework**

### 3.0 Planned Activities

#### Result 1 Park Management Models Successfully Implemented

This result is supported by three (3) contract results packages (sets of activities). These include:

CRP	Activity	May-July			August-October			Nov-Jan 2002			Feb-April		
<b>1</b>	<b>Revise Management Plan for HEC</b>	x											
	Revise MP based on HEC results		x										
	Reproduce MP in Bulgarian and English		x	x									
<b>2</b>	<b>Capital Development Projects</b>												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourist Management and Information Infrastructure for both Parks contracts and construction</li> </ul>	x	x										
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBNP and RNP small projects (interp &amp; ed)</li> <li>Proposals</li> <li>Approval</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Final reports</li> </ul>		x										
			x		x	x							
				x	x	x	x						
								x					
<b>2</b>	<b>Capacity Development Projects</b>												
	Medicinal Plant Management Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop with partners</li> <li>Field work</li> <li>Database additions</li> <li>Resource valuation</li> <li>Management Plan for commercial species (draft)</li> <li>Workshop for plan review</li> <li>Gap Analysis and Summer Field Work Needs Identified</li> </ul>			x									
				x									
				x	x								
						x							
							x	x					
									x	x			
											x		
													x
	Ecological Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop to develop sets of key indicators for ecology &amp; management plan monitoring</li> <li>Field work</li> <li>Data base – reports and review</li> <li>Additional Field Activities described</li> </ul>		x	x									
					x	x	x						
										x	x		
													x

CRP	Activity	May-July		August-October			Nov-Jan 2002			Feb-April		
	GIS data base management											
	▪ Updating borders	x	x	x	x	x	x					
	▪ Normalization of new Agroles data	x		x	x	x	x					
	▪ Unification of object classes											
	▪ Management zone cadaster completed							x				
	▪ GPS training			x	x							
	▪ GIS management training							x		x		
	Ranger Training					x	x				x	
	Administrative Training					x				x		
	Proposal Development Training						x	x				
	<b>NEW ENV. LEGISLATION – ORIENTATION AND T.A.</b>					x	x		?	?		
<b>5</b>	<b>Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Preparation and Launch Activities</b>	x										
	Rapid Assessment Exercises	x	x	x								
	Data Processing and analysis				x							
	Management Planning workshops					x	x	x	x			
	GIS Development						x	x			x	x
	Plan Writing									x	x	x
	<b>Public Awareness</b>											
	Preface	x										
	Phase 1		x			x	x					
	Phase 2							x	x			
	Phase 3											x

**CRP 1 Management Plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks revised and delivered to Council of Ministers for approval.**

National Park Management plans for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks were approved in the previous quarter. During this quarter, the Plans were re-formatted and reproduced.

BCEG Project PMU has completed reproduction and distribution of the documents in Bulgarian.

- 40 copies of the Management Plan were reproduced in the Bulgarian language for each National Park. These were distributed to National Park Directorates, NNPS, Park section Heads, and other relevant state authorities;
- 20 copies of the Management Plans will be reproduced in the English language. Translation of both management plans was completed this quarter. Editing of the translated text by the Project's Team Leader commenced during this quarter, and is expected to be completed for the new year.

- 70 copies, of each Park's Management Plan Summaries (prescriptive sections) – were reproduced and distributed to Park Directorates for each ranger and additional local/regional stakeholders.

### **White Brotherhood (Universal Fellowship of Light) – followers of Peter Dunov**

In an effort to address the controversy surrounding the annual devotions of the White Brotherhood in the 7 Rila Lakes Area, the Project Team Leader joined the Rila National Park Director in a 48 hour visit to campsite of the Dunovists, in August.

Day one involved a comprehensive assessment of the area and impacts associated with devotees, and extensive discussion with the camp organizers. Day 2 witnessed the performance of the annual “pan-eurhythmy dance” performed by over 1000 followers, with over 1000 observers in attendance.

Park authorities estimated that there were between 4-5000 people visiting the 7 Rila Lakes area on the penultimate day of the annual pilgrimage. Only one quarter of these visitors appears to be Dunovists, with more than 500 tents registered on the final night before the pan-eurhythmic performance.

Limits on camping and impacts discussed and agreed with the Regional White Brother office, are still contested by many followers of the Dunovist Movement. A ‘protocol’ between the camp organizers and the Park successfully guided this summer’s activities. Monitoring activities were carried out jointly, and both parties found the other cooperative. The BCEG Project has again offered to host a meeting of the relevant “authorities” to improve further the management and location of camps, as well as access, trail rehabilitation, and the longer term impacts of such high concentrations of people on lake ecology and surrounding vegetation.

***Work Plan Implications***      *English language versions of the two management plans will be reproduced and distributed in the new year.*

### **CRP 2      Effective Management and Priority Actions of Management Plans Supported**

Approval of the National Park management plans for Central Balkan and Rila signal a program of capital investment and training. Activities are related to three-year action plans in each Park, and to annual operations plans as supplied to the NNPS, MOEW. Total costs for FY 2001 are shared between this Project, the National Environment Protection Fund, and the National Trust ecoFund.

Both national park directorates are responsible for developing and managing these activities with minimal project supervision and/or technical support. Central Balkan successfully applied and was granted funding for a high-mountain meadow rehabilitation project around Botev Peak, where soil erosion is severe. The pilot project was funded by the National Trust ecoFund. More than 26,000 square meters of gully erosion check dams were built under supervision of the Park with a 59,000 BGL grant. These are the first grant funds other than USAID funds, received by CBNP for activities in the new management plan.

In keeping with the Annual Work Plan, BCEG Project has provided support for:

## 2.1 Capital Investment Projects

Park investment projects continued to be funded from two sources – National Environment Protection Fund and the BCEG Project. BCEG Project funds use both the criteria and proposal formats indicated in the previous quarterly report. The following park projects were supported by the BCEG Project:

### Rila National Park

Rila NP 01	Tourist Picnic Areas	Proposed Budget 13,000	Actual Budget 13,450
<b>Description/Comments:</b> 25 picnic areas were planned, with 18 sets of picnic furniture produced; and four sets installed in the area of Beli Iskar. The remaining installation will be completed in the spring, as the graphic elements in association with each picnic area have been delayed by production problems.			
Rila NP 02	Park Entrance Points	50,000	49,200
<b>Description/Comments:</b> 8 main entrances were planned and 8 produced, with one installed at the Maliovitsa trail head. 30 secondary entrances – all produced and ready for installation, and 35 tertiary entrance signs – production completed. Installation is delayed by problems with the graphic production of signboard elements. Installation will occur in the spring of 2002.			
Rila NP 03	Visitor Management Signage	16,000	?
<b>Description/Comments:</b> Visitor management signs refer to the signboards used to explain park rules and regulations. The NNPS and Parks are presently working together to agree a set of icons/images that will be used throughout the national parks system, and become a standard for park/visitor management signage.			
Rila NP 05	Info Bulletin	2000 BGL	-0-
<b>Description/Comments:</b> The Project was re-evaluated with the PR officer and staff of the Directorate. A system of public information bulletins was eliminated in favor of a more simple, efficient and cost-effective tool. The National Park Directorate is now using a system of press releases to ensure messages are widely spread by regional mass media, and accomplished in a more cost-effective manner.			
Rila NP 06	Interpretation and Education Facilities	16000	?
<b>Description/Comments:</b> These facilities are being designed in conjunction with the Ecotourism Initiative Group of Samokov, in the northern section of Rila National Park. The design, production and installation will be a joint effort of the Initiative Group with the RNP staff. To date, a workshop has been held and the framework of an interpretive plan for the area developed. 21 participants were engaged in the workshop and a report produced.			

Rila NP 07	Conservation Education Materials	3000	4,157
<b>Description/Comments:</b> A set of 10 lessons plans specific to Rila National Park complement the conservation education curriculum materials produced under the GEF Project. Designed by team of teachers and teacher trainers, these materials focus on primary education, biology, chemistry and computer skills. These will be distributed through the network of schools (150) surrounding the national park. Design of these materials has commenced.			
Rila NP 10	Visitor Information and Safety Materials	4,700	7,000
<b>Description/Comments:</b> The Directorate has produced four leaflets on (1) fire prevention, (2) tourist safety, (3) solid waste, (4) fishing. 1000 leaflets have been produced in favor of each theme. Distribution has been accomplished through the Park Visitor Center in Panichiste, as well as through each of the Park Sections, which have distributed them to chalets, rest houses and local hotels. Three leaflets remain to be designed and printed.			

### Central Balkan National Park

CB 04	Visitor Infrastructure - Kalofer	13600	15,469
<b>Description/Comments:</b> Local purchase order with a contractor from Kalofer includes the production of 36 benches, 17 tables, 28 chairs, seven fire places, two pit latrines, 2 children's playgrounds, 3 water tap restorations. All elements were produced in a timely fashion and installed in preparation for the 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Graphic elements/signage is outstanding due to technical problems.			
CB 08	Archaeological Inventory	3,000	2,850
<b>Description/Comments:</b> The archaeological inventory required under instruction of the Council of Ministers was successfully completed during the August period. An extensive report was completed with both the geographic locations of the inventory, as well as their significance. Both form the basis of a selective interpretive program for the National Park in the future.  A final report will be logged with the Ministry of Culture, as well as the MOEW/NNPS.			
CB 11	Portable Fauna Exhibit	2,200	2,780
<b>Description/Comments:</b> A subcontractor will finalize production of 6 (two sided) billboards presenting the fauna of CBNP and a leaflet representing the traveling exposition. The materials focus on primary and early - secondary levels. The exhibition will be used as a tool for realization of the nature conservation education program in the schools around the Park (about 100) and in the visitors centers of Karlovo and Ribaritsa. Completion of the project is expected in the next quarter.  No activity is shown on this project due to the activities of the relevant Park specialist in the field.			

CB 12	Post Card set	4,000	4,000
<b>Description/Comments:</b> A subcontractor will produce 1000 sets of post cards which will be distributed through the visitor's centers. 12 qualitative images of the CB National Park will be selected through a nationally announced competition for amateur and professional photographers. The PD will have the rights to use them for future information and education materials production. Five people from the Park staff will be trained in taking photos. A Group of professional photographers will be identified as Park Directorate partners.  To date, the competition for photos and pre-selection of winners were completed. Final winners will be selected in the next quarter and photos reproduced as postcards for promotion and publicity purposes. The Project is implemented by the National Park in conjunction with Borrowed Nature.			
CB 14	Multi-Media presentation	4,300	N/A
<b>Description/Comments:</b> This project was cancelled in favor of a national parks multi-media CD addressing the three national parks in the context of the national biodiversity conservation strategy. The multi-media presentation is being produced and supervised by the BCEG Project PMU and its Public Information and Education Specialist.			
CB 16	Reserve Boundary Demarcation	7,000	8,700
<b>Description/Comments:</b> Materials for reserve boundary demarcation were provided under this Project. National Parks supplied labor and transport. Boundary marking was completed during the summer months for the National Park's Reserve system.			
CB 17	CBNP HQ Internet Connection	\$ USD 990.00	
<b>Description/Comments:</b> This project was added to the Park's project list. Significant investigations have been conducted to assure CNBP of a dependable, dedicated internet connection. This will be afforded through a radio modem. Procurement will proceed upon receipt of approval for equipment purchase.			

## 2.2 Training

Training formed an important part of this summer's activities – as theory and practice were combined to good effect. Training themes largely focus on park management plan implementation related to ecological monitoring, compliance with the Medicinal Plants Act, and the applications and uses of GPS/GIS as management support tools.

Medicinal Plants Management	Phase 1	\$3,200	Actual	\$3,093
<p><b>Description/Comments:</b></p> <p>Both National Parks are required to produce management plans for medicinal plants of commercial and conservation significance. Emphasis on methodology, techniques, community and ranger participation featured prominently in this summer's NTNR resource assessment. By design, the assessment focused on commercial resources with a strong link to the collaborative management of NTNRs in the eco-enterprise component of the Project. The personal and commercial collection of blueberries, and an assessment of resource distribution and dependence was successfully completed this August with the participation of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, local community/resource collectors, and national park rangers accompanied by technical specialists. The results of the survey contribute significantly to both a resource valuation of national park benefits, as well as to the eco-enterprise activities addressed in the next section of this report.</p> <p>Training was conducted in two pilot programs areas – the Klisura park section of Central Balkan National Park, and the Yakorouda and Belitsa parks sections of Rila National Park. A total of 24 people were trained in both of the national parks. In addition, the Rila Blueberry assessment employed the expertise of the Central Balkan staff in both the training and field work. All members of the training groups took part in all stages of the resource assessment.</p> <p>In addition, berries were tested for heavy metals in appropriate labs in Sofia.</p> <p>Additional resource assessments will be conducted starting in the spring, when high-mountain environments are again accessible. Resource assessments help to establish important baselines for both conservation and commercial populations of renewable natural resources. Select resources and regions will be monitored on an annual basis as part of each Parks ecological monitoring program.</p>				

MANAGEMENT PLAN TRAINING FOR THE PARK STAFF (RANGERS) OF CBNP	Planned	3,700 BGL	Actual	3,796.50 BGL
<p>Description/Comments: 3 ranger trainings took place in September and October. Three- 2-day sessions trained 45 park rangers and 6 section heads. The training was led and conducted by 6 experts from the National Park Directorate HQ. The first component of each part of the training included presentation of the Management plan's objectives, philosophy and structure. During the following sessions all park zones were presented and the regimes, norms were discussed for each of them. The presentations were given by the park director, deputy director and members of the expert staff. The last part of the presentation was assigned to a brief introduction to the Programs and projects included into the MP. The second component of the training included answering questions based on examples of the zone's regimes and norms, case studies and scenarios for solving different problems with the help of the prescriptions of each zone in the MP. <u>Results:</u> The park rangers discussed and proposed procedures and forms for issuing annual and temporary permits for vehicles access to the park territory. They developed skills for solving different cases on the bases and implementing the Management plan prescriptions. A list of actions was prepared for announcing the Management plan's zones and required regimes and norms to the public (different target groups).</p>				



National Parks GIS	Budget 2001	\$21,000	Actual (to date) \$14,232
<p><b>Description/Comments:</b> The GIS Needs Assessment conducted by the Project and completed last quarter, served to guide the development of each Park's Geographic Information System applications and action plan.</p> <p>1. <b>Georeference</b> – Transformation of Bulgaria 1970 to WGS84. In order to resolve the inherent discrepancies between the Bulgarian geo-referenced coordinate system, and the world geo-referencing coordinate system, the Project procured the services of an expert group to provide the transformation software necessary to allow the use of Global Positioning System units within each Park. Completed transformation software now allows the free use of GPS units within each national park. The software allows the GPS unit readings to be transformed to the prevailing Bulgarian geo-referencing coordinates and maps. Accuracy of coordinate transformation is within one meter. Two transformation programs have been supplied – one for Central Balkan, and one for Rila, National Parks</p> <p>2. <b>GPS</b> - 6 new GPS units (Trimble) were purchased for National Parks. A training program supported their first use in both national parks. Two GIS/GPS experts assisted the Project's Biodiversity Expert with a course that focused on both theory and application to management plan implementation.</p> <p><b>3. Training - Central Balkan National Park:</b> 27-29/9/01 – 13 Park staff trained in GPS theory and practical application. Course led by D. Boteva and two Technical Experts – Kountchev and Minchev. Participants included a representative from the NNPS and the Executive Agency on the Environment.</p> <p><b>Rila National Park:</b> 11-13/10/01 – 12 Park staff trained in GPS theory and practical application. Course led by D. Boteva, and one technical expert – Michinev.</p> <p>A final training course that focuses on GPS coordinate transformation, development of computer files and application to the GIS for each Park, will be conducted in November, for two days, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. 6 trainees with specific responsibilities in GIS operations and maintenance in Rila and Central Balkan, as well as NNPS and the Executive Agency for the Environment, will participate.</p> <p><b>Land commission format converters</b> to AutoCad LDD and back to Commission formats. The Project assisted the NNPS with the necessary program to convert land commission park boundary cadaster coordinates to the Ministry system, and back again.</p> <p><b>Park Management Zones Digitization</b> – Management zones are being added to each of the Park's GIS and must be digitized from 1:1000- scale maps. This was a requirement in the management plan approval, as registered management zones are a requirement in the law. Digitization will start in the next quarter</p> <p>In addition, the Project will support additional GIS development recommended in the needs assessment.</p>			

Ecological Monitoring	Planned	\$12,000	Actual	(see above)
<p><b>Description/Comments:</b></p> <p>The National Parks ecological monitoring program commenced with this summer's resource assessment for blueberries, <i>vaccinium sp.</i> In the two pilot areas of the two parks. While limited in range and scope, the assessment exercise supplied two important dimensions to the evolving ecological monitoring program of national parks. (1) It showed in practice how rangers and community members can be engaged in information collection; (2) It helped to establish a baseline for information that has never been collected before.</p> <p>Two additional activities were conducted by the BCEG Project in support of evolving a national parks ecological monitoring program: (1) working relations were established with the Executive Environmental Agency responsible for environmental monitoring in the country. Close coordination with the Agency is envisioned, as it takes on an increasingly important role in national environmental monitoring activities. This may or may not include biodiversity monitoring from within and outside of protected areas. A MOEW restructuring later in the year (2001) may address this issue. (2) Close coordination with the NNPS on the dimension of a national park system GIS that can incorporate each park data base, ecological and baseline indicators and monitoring information in a systematic fashion. This was coordinated with a UNDP capacity building needs assessment for GIS and biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Dimitrina Boteva (Project Biodiversity Specialist) continues to manage a schedule of events that will result in a strategy for a minimal ecological monitoring program in each park, and that supports each Parks GIS, and the applications using GPS. This schedule will be the focus of the next two quarters.</p> <p>Ecological Monitoring Program Development Schedule</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workshop with experts –NPDs, NNPS, BAS, NGO, EEA – first week of February (4-10.02; 3 days max</li> </ol> <p><u>Tasks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key set of indicators park wide for BD and for tourist impact</li> <li>- prioritize indicators to start the monitoring system next summer for each park (difference in terms of species if necessary)</li> <li>- define base line information for interpreting the behavior of each indicator and information sources</li> <li>- data collection, storage and presentation techniques</li> <li>- roles and responsibilities of key staff members and supporting institutions</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Series of meetings with smaller groups of experts (mainly Bulgarian Academy of Science and Directorates of National Parks) on the bases of different levels of biodiversity and different groups of organism February – April 2002</li> </ol> <p><u>Tasks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- suitable monitoring program for each indicator priority the ones selected on the workshop</li> <li>- special and temporal scales for measurement and reporting</li> <li>- data forms design</li> <li>- equipment needs definition</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Park staff training for indicators and techniques of data collection and monitoring of the priority elements selected – May 2002 (Workshop format will include participants from both parks) 3-4 days</li> </ol> <p><u>Tasks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field data collection on key indicators of Biodiversity and tourism impacts (selection based on the results of steps 1 and 2)</li> <li>- Medicinal plants resource assessment of at least 5 more medicinal plants park wide + Vaccinium in the pilot projects areas.</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Workshop to review and analyze the results and lessons learned from the system establishment and its first application (DNP, NNPS, EEA, BAS) – September, 2001.</li> </ol> <p>Develop MOU between actors to guide long term monitoring activities</p>				

**Work Plan Implications:** *The next six months will focus on capacity building at Directorate and field levels. Planning and preparation for the next field season (from May 2002) will be the focus on training activities for ecological monitoring, NTNR assessment, and GIS development.*

## **CRP 5 Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Prepared**

The following major activities were undertaken during this reporting period:

1. **The Rapid Ecological Assessment** – consisting of 26 days of intensive transect work throughout the nature park, was completed by an interdisciplinary team of 24 people. The final field excursion took place in August, and was supplemented by two five-day assessments of medicinal plants of conservation and commercial importance in the Nature Park. In total, more than 500 person-days were devoted to botanical, zoological and ecological assessments of the terrain. The results of this work were presented in a workshop to review and analyze the findings.

This methodology represents a first for Bulgaria, and is an important contribution to field-based biodiversity assessment techniques supported by GPS.

2. **The Rapid Assessment exercise also consisted of five major socio-economic** field-based exercises. These were:
  - Tourist survey consisting distribution patterns, KAP ( knowledge, attitudes and practices), and impacts
  - Local population resource use practices and dependence;
  - Socio-economic profile of surrounding municipalities;
  - Development activities and expectations (scoping activity with Municipalities);
  - Financial values arising from present practices;

The results of this survey were presented at the REA analysis workshop in October. The survey was conducted over a period of 24 days, with 130 person days employed in information gathering.

3. **Financial Valuation** - Preliminary financial values associated with the Nature Park were developed in a valuation framework for natural resource, labor and income generation associated with the Nature Park. These were presented by Dr. Steve Dennison, Natural Resource Economist, during his consultant assignment in October. These will be further elaborated in advance of commencing with management planning.
4. **Special Commission** - Appeals from the Abbot of Rila Monastery to the Prime Minister, resulted in the formation of a special commission consisting of the Ministers of Environment and Waters and Agriculture and Forests (accompanied by 2 deputy ministers of AF- Ploukchieva and Nahit Kabil), to the Monastery, on September 28<sup>th</sup>. The Commission was empowered to visit the Monastery to investigate the prevailing issues of the Abbot, surrounding land restitution. It was empowered to represent the Government, and make recommendations to the Government on land restitution issues. These specifically have an effect on the future of the Rila Monastery Forest Reserve, and 46 hectares with contested land ownership.

A copy of the letter reporting on the Mission, from Deputy Minister Ploukchieva, (MOAF) is attached as an Appendix. Also attached is the response of the Holy Synod to the Project efforts to engage them in the Plan process.

5. **Rila Monastery and the Rilomanastirska Forest Reserve** - Meeting with Deputy Minister Illiaz (MOEW) occurred on October 15, with Jay Lee (USAID-Bulgaria) attending. The meeting sought clarification on two fundamental issues affecting management planning of Rila Monastery Nature Park:
  - (1) An indication of the GOB's position regarding restitution of all land to Rila Monastery, including the Rila Monastery Forest Reserve; and
  - (2) an official indication of participation from the Rila Monastery, **AND/or** the Synod, to the Nature Park Management Planning effort.

We made it clear that the management planning effort was unable to proceed without these two issues clarified. As the MOEW bears responsibility for supervising compliance with the TOR for this management planning effort, Deputy Minister Illiaz needs to provide instructions to the management planning team. Management planning activities remain at an impasse until these issues are made clear. As of this report, neither issue has been clarified by Government/MOEW.

As a consequence, management planning activities are delayed until these two matters are resolved by Government.

6. **Rila Monastery Nature Park Data base and GIS** – the natural history (botany and zoology) data have been developed to include earlier information from resource base inventory work conducted for Rila National Park under the GEF Project, and the REA activities of 2001. This new database forms one of the most comprehensive data bases for protected areas in the country, and will support applications in GIS. The data bases were completed with the expert assistance of database managers from the Institute of Zoology and Botany, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Preliminary discussions were held with contractors to manage the data base and GIS applications during the Management Plan preparation. Geohide was selected as the most competent of Sofia-based contractors to provide support and management of the Nature Parks GIS, until such time as it is turned over to the MOAF and MOEW.

Finally, the rapid assessment exercises conducted in support of socio-economic (tourism, community practices, infrastructure and profiling), will be incorporated into the database and GIS. A working team will transform the data into an “access” frame to allow for queries in the Nature Park's GIS.

7. **Rapid Assessment Analysis Workshop** – October 3-6. A three-day workshop was conducted for 29 specialists. Participants included members of the REA and Rapid Socio-Economic Assessment teams, the BCEG Project, and consultant Steve Dennison. USAID-Environment Officer, Jay Lee, participated briefly. The workshop was organized and managed by the Core Planning Team as an exercise in workshop management and facilitation. In addition, the workshop served as a summary and analysis of the summer's fieldwork conducted in support of Rila Monastery Nature Park management planning. Results included:

- ✓ A comprehensive analysis of the species, habitat, ecological and conservation significance of the territory;
- ✓ A preliminary identification of human threats and dependence on the territory;
- ✓ Tourism impacts and tourist distribution, as well as the territory's first tourist count;
- ✓ Preliminary analysis of the financial values arising from activities on the territory;
- ✓ Preliminary zone plan for the territory.

The results of this workshop form the basis for a series of public information and stakeholder/planning team information packages. The latter is necessary for informed participation in the management planning process.

***Work Plan Implications*** *The work plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park is at an impasse if the two preconditions for effective management planning are not clarified and decided on soon. The Project has suggested the end of November as the preliminary benchmark for both a Government of Bulgaria decision regarding the status of the Rila Monastery Forest Reserve, and for the Synod to clarify its position regarding participation in the management planning effort.*

*The BCEG Project is optimistic that it can successfully engage all stakeholders in the management planning process. But it can not guarantee the efficacy of a management plan developed without (1) participation of the landowner; and (2) a clear determination on the status of the land according to law and constitution.*

*We don't believe that the present Administration can effectively address all the outstanding issues of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (of which Rila Monastery land ownership is one), in the remaining time of this Project. We do believe however, that the Project can assist USAID and the GOB better determine an approach for dealing with the preamble to management planning. We believe that this process has several steps before management planning can commence:*

- 1. a full briefing of the special commission on Rila Monastery (September 2001) on the facts, the TOR and management planning process used by the BCEG Project.*
- 2. The same orientation for members of the Orthodox Church.*
- 3. Appointment of an interagency-church task force;*
- 4. Development of a pre-planning agreement between the Government and the Church regarding the management planning process for Rila Monastery Nature. This will include a full description of all outstanding issues specific to the Nature Park and detailed agreement about which ones will be dealt with by the management plan, and those that can not be dealt with through the planning process.*
- 5. Agreement on Government and Church participation in the planning process;*
- 6. Agreement on the planning timetable (a minimum of 6 months is required to effectively plan for this territory, and three month to ensure effective public review, and write-up).*

***The BCEG Project recommends this approach to USAID-Bulgaria and the Project's CTO. We believe it is necessary for the Agency to make clear its preferences for GoB engagement and renewed commitment to the RM Nature Park planning process.***

## Result 2 Models for generating and capturing biodiversity conservation revenue are improved

This result is supported by two contract results packages (1) for Eco-enterprise, consisting of non-timber natural resource management and ecotourism (CRP 03a and 3b), and (2) for Financial Mechanisms (CRP 04):

CRP	Activity	May-July			August-Oct			Nov –Jan 2002			Feb-April		
<b>3a</b>	<b>NTNR</b>												
	Phase 1 (complete)												
	Phase 2												
	▪ Rapid rural assessment (complete)												
	▪ Situation analysis Survey (complete)												
	▪ Survey analysis and report	x	x										
	Phase 3												
	▪ Local NTNR action plan for each pilot area			x	x								
	Phase 4												
	▪ Collector Training				x	x	x						
	▪ Community Education				x	x							
	▪ Resource Monitoring Prog					x	x	x					
	▪ Capitalization identified				x			x					
	▪ Enterprises Identified and Assisted				x								
	▪ Identify market opportunities							x	x	x			
	▪ New Harvest Season Action Plans developed										x	x	x
<b>3b</b>	<b>Ecotourism</b>												
	Phase 1 (complete)												
	Phase 2 (complete)												
	Phase 3 – Models												
	▪ Action Planning	x	x										
	▪ Baseline data collection	x	x	x									
	▪ Publicity and information development		x	x	x								
	▪ Product Development		x	x									
	Phase 4												
	▪ Market Studies (regional)				x	x							
	▪ Product Implementation				x	x	x						
	Phase 5												
	▪ Business Planning					x	x	x					
	▪ Business Financing							x	x				
	Training							x	x		x	x	
	Park Tourism Cluster Meetings					x		x			x		

CRP	Activity	May- July			August- Oct			Nov –Jan 2002			Feb- April		
<b>4</b>	<b>Innovative Financing</b>												
	Concept paper for NFM TF concept			x									
	Appoint NFM TF and launch meeting				x								
	Requests for Proposals design (venture capital fund)					x							
	Selection of award(s)							x					
	Concession Policy review complete										x		
	Permit system review complete												
	AOPs and funding proposals from CBNP and Rila reviewed and endorsed as necessary.										x	x	
	Completion of recommendation on NEPF and NET												x
	Task Force Meetings				x			x			x		

**CRP 3      Park-related eco-enterprises demonstrated for ecotourism and natural, non-timber resources collection**

**CRP 3a      *Non-timber Natural Resources (NTNR)***

Working teams of National Park staff attached to the pilot areas have been extremely active during this reporting period, as August and September are key collection periods for many of the Park's non-timber natural resources. The following activities are noteworthy:

1. **Situation Analysis** – this report was reviewed and completed for the pilot areas, supply chain, resource assessment, and NTNR management options, during this reporting period. Three publications result from the situation analysis, and are reported in three volumes:
  - a. Socio-economic and supply chain assessment of blueberries (*vaccinium* sp.) in the National Park pilot areas, and within Bulgaria and European Markets; The survey was completed, analyzed and written during the August period. It forms volume 1 of this situation analysis.
  - b. *Vaccinium* sp, resource assessment for two pilot areas, one each, respectively in Central Balkan and Rila National Parks. The resource assessment was carried out in August, with results analyzed in September, and reported in October. The reports include a resource assessment of the two pilot areas, a literature review of wildlife dependency on blueberries, and an analysis of the blueberries for heavy metals. This forms volume II of the situation analysis.
  - c. An Assessment of Management Options and Tools for NTNR management in Bulgarian National Parks. This report forms volume III of the situation analysis. The last report was completed with the assistance of Enterprise Development Specialist, Jared Hardner during the period, during the first weeks of August. The economic analysis of the blueberry markets and supply chain indicate IMPORTANTLY that there is little scope for small and medium enterprises

related to blueberries (and virtually all other NTNRS) in rural communities bordering the Parks. Rather, the assessment demonstrates a cost-efficiency in the supply chain that offers little opportunity for value to be added and realized at community level.

**NTNR Management Mechanism and Tools** – Hardner spend 11 days of consulting time in the United States, reviewing NTNR management mechanism from around the United States, and other areas of the world. A series of memos provide guidance to the development and implementation of:

- ✓ A revised permitting system for NTNR collection;
- ✓ Draft Contract for commissioning the collection of NTNRS with private companies that can demonstrated more effective management of the resource, AND benefits to local communities;
- ✓ An investigation of organic certification, and an analysis of any advantages that accrue to Bulgaria from supporting a supply chain of custody required for organic certification in European markets.

Hardner returned to Bulgaria at the end of October, to present these results. In addition, the full situation analysis for blueberries was made to the National Working Group in the same month. The presentation was repeated for a specially formed task force of National Park Directors, the NNPS, the National Trust ecoFund, the National Environment Protection Fund. The presentation forms the basis of a power point presentation. It is attached as slides in an Appendix to this Quarterly Report.

**The implications of the NTNR pilot situation analysis are threefold:**

1. The decision to implement a commission contract, and revised permit system for NTNR management rests with National Parks. In lieu of a commission fee, Parks could request successful commissions to reinvest in social or economic development project in rural communities adjacent to the Parks. This is a more efficient system for encouraging rural development and economic growth than can be managed by the Park system.

A commission system requires clear territorial definition, and understanding of potential yields from the commission area, a performance matrix, and a performance bond.

2. The NTNRS collected from the Park represent a financial value to local income generation and national economic development far in excess of Government investments in Park management and operations. (This matter is elaborated in the report on the next contract result.)
3. SME development, based on NTNRS coming from the National Parks, are inappropriate investments for donors AND for local communities, at the present time. Our situation analysis demonstrates that the existing supply chain is operating efficiency, and if anything, is consolidating, rather than expanding. We expect demand for NTNRS, however, to increase, as international public demand for “natural and pure” and “wild” products, is expected to grow. The MOEW and National Parks are better off using the economics of NTNRS coming from Parks in Bulgaria as a justification for national budget investments, and to argue for an increase.



In addition, it is now time for National Parks to ensure that management mechanisms are in place to control and mitigate against eventual impacts.

**Work Plan Implications**      *All Park Directorates will be assisted by the BCEG Project in making a case to the MOEW for effecting changes to the permit system, and for experimental use of a commission contract. Three project inputs are envisioned in Park Directorates decide to act on improvements to NTNR management in their parks:*

1. *continued professional assistance with resource assessment in the Park, related to NTNRs of commercial interest;*
2. *implementation of an improved permit system;*
3. *advertisement and negotiations of an experimental commission contract for one, or both of the national parks;*

### **CRP 3b      Ecotourism**

This sub-result successfully realized a set of action plans described in the last quarterly report. Two marketing and publicity events (catalytic events) were staged by the Ecotourism Initiative Groups in conjunction with their respective National Park, in each of the pilot areas.

Catalytic events employed for two reasons: (1) Each event serves to galvanize the cooperation and planning efforts of each Initiative Group. Members are required to plan and execute an event that promotes themselves, sells their goods and services, and advertises their links to the National Park; (2) Each event is used to celebrate or emphasize a park-based facility or service that was identified and developed between the Initiative Group and the National Park. Towards this end, the BCEG Project supported a minimum of 10 workshops with each of the Initiative Groups in August, September and October. These workshops/meetings focused on:

- planning – elements of the events, responsibilities, budgets;
- identifying target audiences and developing a marketing strategy;
- product development and pricing;
- promotional materials development;
- journalists trip;
- sponsorships;
- protocols and relations with the parks and other institutions;
- review of the results and self-evaluation;
- logistics and event management

### **Activities and Results**

- Intermittent TA was provided to facilitate all workshops. In addition, short term TA was provided in the field of media relations; pricing and marketing; marketing tools development; fund raising and attraction of sponsorships; specific clients groups and special services (for an expatriate market);
- Rila - Maliovitza – 6-7 October– approximately 300 visitors/ participants in the events, 150 clients were recorded as receiving services.
- Central Balkan - Kalofer – 20- 21 October – approximately 700 visitors/ participants in the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event of the Park, with 250 clients recorded as receiving services.
- Marketing leaflets and posters for the two events produced;

- information centers for both events were effectively organized by each Initiative Group;
- Business sponsorships attracted in both places – resulting in:
  - ✓ Local enterprise sponsorship in Samokov, for the participation of children and musical entertainment with an approximate value of 1,500 BGL
  - ✓ Commercial sponsorship (Coca-Cola) and Municipal support for children's participation and entertainment with an approximate value of 2,000 BGL.
- Exit surveys were tested and analyzed; But all groups realize that these were not used to best effect.
- A trip for journalists to Samokov was organized in advance of the Rila event;
- Media coverage for both events – 16 printed publications, plus 7 TV and radio broadcasts in national and regional media.
- Both events benefited from the exchange of Group members (**cross-visits**) during each event. Visiting members participated in an evaluation and testing of goods and services provided at each event.

**International ecotourism consultant Prof. Donald Hawkins**, again provided consulting services from September 9 – 18. Specifically, Professor Hawkins assisted the BCEG Project with a set of actions related to:

- ✓ **MOU** between the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Ministry of Economy – Department of Tourism. An eventual MOU will be developed in concert with partners and USAID that promotes collaboration and cooperation on tourism survey and tourism marketing; the development and production of marketing materials; improvement of a database that provides special features and reservations capacity; marketing and public information outlet in Sofia; and collaboration on trade fairs.

Towards this end, the Project met with Deputy Minister N. Hajinikolov, Ministry of Economy, Tourism. General agreement was reconfirmed on participation of his Ministry in the Project's Working Group, participation in trade fairs, and joint activities related to marketing surveys and data base development.

- ✓ **Baseline Information and Indicators** - Professor Hawkins helped to consolidate the activities of the Project's National Ecotourism Working Group by focusing on the selection of baseline information collection, and the identification of indicators that would serve to evaluate rural, protected areas-focused, ecotourism development. Cooperative links were established with the Tourism Faculty, University of Sofia. The faculty and student of the department will assist the Initiative Groups with information collection for baseline monitoring.
- ✓ Two concept papers are being produced with Professor Hawkins help – **International Ecotourism Symposium and Public Awareness Event**. This includes the international event surrounding ecotourism in Bulgaria, and the UN Year of the Mountains and Year of Ecotourism. This event is scheduled for October next year, and suggests an extension to the present contract duration. October has been selected to: (a) allow for another full season of Initiative Group operations and business plan development; (b) sufficient time for baseline data collection and a performance matrix; (c) the new tourism policy and development of a working MOU between MOEW and MOE. (d) coincide with other international events and the availability of guest speakers. (e) ensure the participation of national parks who will be conducting a full summer season of activities related to high-mountain access.

- ✓ The other concept paper addresses the evolution of a **protected areas ecotourism competitive cluster**. The competitive cluster concept is based on the model promoted by USAID in Bulgaria, but focuses more specifically on all aspects of rural, sustainable tourism development in a country with an extensive system of protected areas. The Project believes that this model has application in furthering the dual purposes of income generation in rural areas, and sustainable management of Bulgaria's protected areas. We believe that this concept has direct applicability to USAID future investments in Bulgarian economic growth, and the competitive cluster concept.

**SME Development** - 13 business concepts originating with the Initiative Groups, were given to the Firm Level Assistance Group (FLAG) for review and evaluation regarding business development opportunities and financing.

The **National Ecotourism Working Group** conducted **2 meetings** during this period- one for the purposes of study tour orientation and preparation, and the other in favor of baseline data collection and indicators development.

**Ecotourism Marketing Studies** – final negotiations with the Ministry of Economy, Department of Tourism, were completed during this period. Delays in realizing the marketing study were a result of reorganization within the MOE. The BCEG Project is finalizing an agreement with the Ministry and a private contractor to supplement a national domestic market survey with questions aimed at protected area ecotourism. Results of the survey will contribute to Initiative Group marketing and product development strategies, as well as national ecotourism promotion and policy. We will use the results and their analysis as a strategic planning tool for the proposed national protected areas ecotourism competitive cluster working group.

**USAID TRANSIT Grant – Study Tour** – to the United States (eastern Tennessee and Washington DC). Final preparation and orientation of the study tour group was completed this reporting period. The final tour itinerary was successfully negotiated with World Learning and the Contract Service Provider, the University of Tennessee. A list of participants and their schedule is attached as an Appendix. In addition, the Study Group met with Professor Hawkins at George Washington University, as part of their schedule.

The BCEG Project provided funding for one additional participant – Nelly Georgieva – intermittent consultant, and Initiative Group facilitator. Nelly will continue to assist each of the Initiative Groups, as well as the Study Tour participants and their Action Plans, on their return from the US.

**Work Plan Implications**      *This activity has among the most significant set of follow-on activities for the next quarter. These include:*

1. *Formation of Protected Area Ecotourism Cluster Task Force*
2. *Finalize ecotourism competitive cluster concept paper;*
3. *Finalization of the market survey tools and concept for next year's international ecotourism symposium;*
4. *Initiate working agreement with University of Sofia/Tourism Department, for collection of baseline data;*
5. *Coordination with FLAG on the short-listing and technical assistance for business plan development for key business concepts in the ecotourism pilot areas;*

6. *Study-tour action plans completed and follow-on funding assistance sought from World Learning.*

**CRP 4      Mechanism for National Park Financial Sustainability Established**

Two international consultants have helped to shape the direction and content of the future financial sustainability of National Parks (and eventually, other protected areas) in Bulgaria. Contribution advancing financial arguments in the new Government were made by Dr. Steve Dennison, and Jared Hardner. Briefly, their contributions included the following:

**1. Concessions**

There is little prospect for the use of “concessions” as a formal tool in Park financing. Definition of the term, “concession”, and its application to state property (national parks), is considered inappropriate by many MOEW officials. Rather, they prefer the use of the term “commissioning” as it allows for several distinct advantages over the application of concessions.

- ✓ Commission can be offered for shorter periods of time than concessions. Often concessions are for a period of 35 years or more, while commissions can be developed and renewed annually, or for shorter, multi-year periods.
- ✓ Commissions are more timely and less time-consuming. Commissions require relatively minimal paper work, a tendering process, and a local review commission, in order to award a contract. Commissions on average are lengthy processes, often taking more than 18 months from concept to award. They presently engage the full Council of Ministers in any award.
- ✓ Revenue from contracts awarded through commissions accrues to the National Environment Protection Fund; monies accruing from concessions form part of the national budget.
- ✓ Performance indicators on contracts are easier to enforce on a regular basis, and more directly linked to each season, than is the case with concessions. A breach of concession is accompanied by lengthy legal action and court procedures. A breach of contract, or poor performance is more likely to be linked directly to a contract renewal for commission contracts.
- ✓ The size of the performance bond in the case of commission contracts is considerably more within the reach of local communities. This engenders a stronger association of protected areas with local tourism services, goods, and facilities management, than if more national in focus.

As a consequence, the Project is carefully monitoring proposed changes to the Concessions Act. The results of the discussion on the concession’s act are expected to be reviewed by Parliament in November, and will affect most significantly the hotel holdings on the Black Sea coast, as well as other private sector investments in the country.

A present, the National Park system has the capacity and tools necessary to commission goods and services in their national parks. Central Balkan will experiment with a contract for campsite management in the White River Campsite, Kalofer, as the first tourism commission in the Parks system. Rila National Park has yet to select a commission contract theme, but will probably focus on tourism services in the 7 Rila Lakes region of the Park.

## 2. National Parks NTNR valuation and Protected Area contributions to the Economy

Environmental economics and biodiversity economics have long touted the financial values of conservation territories, often citing watershed values, carbon sinks, and fresh air as commodities that provide financial and social value. These are often posed in hypothetical and theoretical arguments for national nature conservation. The BCEG Project has advanced the theory with practical demonstrations of the financial value of non-timber natural resources harvesting that is allowed under the regimes and norms of each Park management plan, and guided by the Medicinal Plants Act.

According to a resource assessment for *vaccinium sp.* (blueberries) conducted this summer, sustainable wild fruit harvesting from within national parks is more than paying for the annual operations and maintenance costs of park management. Figures from the annual blueberry harvest in Bulgaria indicate that as much as 75% of the total blueberry commodity exported from this country comes from Bulgaria's three high-mountain national parks. (The remainder coming from the Rhodopes and other areas of the Stara Planina). If one considers the direct value of this wild resource to the local economy, then collection from the national parks is contributing, on average, 1.5-2.5 million leva to the local economy in direct sales of berries by collectors to buyers. This valuation does not include the value of fruits collected for personal use. Value varies with annual productivity patterns. Productivity patterns are dictated most by annual weather cycles, rather than by prevailing harvesting activities.

The annual operations and maintenance budget of the three national parks averages 1 million BGL per annum. This investment is more than repaid by blueberry revenues to local collectors alone. If the Government has to set up a welfare system in lieu of this revenue generation, it would be hard-pressed to find a more effective way for realizing local benefits for many of the rural communities and minorities, which presently capitalize on wild products.

Value continues to be added to the wild berry product through out the supply chain, indicating a greater commodity value to private sector agri-business and national economic development.

The Rila and Central Balkan resource valuations have only focused on one commercial resource from within the national parks. There are others, and they include mushrooms, other wild berries, wild plant stems, leaves and blossoms. Only mushrooms do not fall within the Medicinal Plants Act.

The conclusion from this summer's financial valuation of wild resources illustrate the following:

1. sustainable non-timber natural resource harvesting is an important activity within national parks, and contributes significantly to local income generation;
2. the present system of income generation is more effective and efficient than any the National Park could establish;
3. Existing levels of protected area management costs are repaid in benefits to the local economy on an order of 50-1000 %, if all NTNR collection is considered.
4. NTNR valuation is a strong argument for continued national investments in the protected area system, and national park management plans are an effective tool for local income generation.

5. Tools for improving NTNR management and rural economic development are provided under CRP 3a – (commission contracts and revised permit system), and are a result of this summer's work and technical assistance. The decision to employ these simple management tools rests with Government.

This presentation forms the basis for development of a national policy/rationale for maintaining the national budget contribution to the national parks system. Presentation of these conclusions formed the basis of a national meeting to the MOEW and guests from the National Trust ecoFund, UNDP, and the NEPF, on October 30, 2001.

### **3. Venture Capital and a Revolving Fund**

Preliminary discussions with the NEPF and the MOEW indicate that a revolving fund can be established within the NEPF. There are two preconditions for a successful revolving fund. The first is that this fund is managed using a set of conditions/bye-laws, including the competitive award of contracts for promotional items (souvenirs) associated with National Parks. The second is that the capital generated from loans and/or grants originating from the revolving fund are left to build to a sufficient level before grants to park capital development or PR efforts can be made.

Both national parks are working separately from this revolving fund to generate sales and promotional items using park financing. At present, National Parks are not allowed to generate profits, and must give away or sell items at cost. The revolving fund, and the use of the Project's small venture capital fund were considered a remedy for this problem. At present, the MOEW's auditor is working with each National Park to develop a bye-law on commissioning in order to circumvent this problem.

### **4. National Parks Fund**

The future of the National Environment Protection Fund, however, remains uncertain. Recent audits and concerns about the use and accountability of the Fund have been raised by the EU and the new GOB administration. Concerns regarding the Fund's transparency have been mooted.

Both the future of the Fund and its operational framework, (as described in the new Environment Protection Act) are unclear. The Government has not yet established a clear policy on either changes to the Fund, or its dissolution. The BCEG Project is convinced that the NEPF can be tailored to meet the funding mechanisms and needs of the National Park system, but that the timing of such activities is out of our hands. The entire use of the Fund is caught up in much larger issues of accountability and transparency in Government expenditure. We submit that this political controversy will continue to characterize the Fund, making it difficult to attract private, commercial, or donor funding.

As a consequence, the BCEG has begun to examine other financial mechanisms in support of long-term Park financing. We have concentrated our efforts most recently on members of the MOEW/NEPF, and National Trust ecoFund. In October, we started investigating the ecoFund as a viable alternative to the NEPF. Our original concept paper, and our overtures to the managing director of the ecoFund are attached as an Appendix.

As we advance the idea of an independent National Parks Fund with Government, donors and the private sector, we are trying to develop mechanisms for capitalizing the National Park Fund quickly and efficiently. One of our first overtures will be to the MOEW/NEPF to examine a one-time capitalization of the Fund from the NEPF, in lieu of repeated annual payments subsidies of Parks. Towards this end, we are also considering the use of the BCEG Venture Capital Fund to secure longer term funding for the National Parks Fund.

## **5. National Task Force**

A National Task Force continues to take shape. We have been working with members of the NEPF and MOEW, along with National Park Directors, in order to further develop a sustainable national parks financing mechanism. More recently this group has included the managing director of the National Trust ecoFund, D. Nenkov. We are expecting to expand the discussion on the subject matter of this Task Force when we include USAID, the Swiss Bilateral program, and UNDP. All are interested in the future of protected area financing, as all have contributed directly to development of the protected area network in Bulgaria.

***Work Plan Implications***      *This activity continues to focus on matters related to Government policy and accountability. The Project team will continue to advance the idea of a National Parks Fund, and will continue to seek capitalization of the fund through the NEPF and donors. The Task Force can be expected to meet 2-3 times during this next quarter to discuss the fund, and the merits of where it should be managed.*

**Result 3      Greater Public Awareness and Participation is demonstrated in protected area management**

CRP	Activity	May-July			August-Oct			Nov –Jan 2002			Feb-April		
<b>6</b>	<b>Public Awareness</b>												
	<b>National Press Campaigns</b>												
	▪ Market study (national)				x	x							
	▪ Newspaper supplements on tourism and ecotourism											x	x
	▪ PA Laws preparation				x			x	x	x	x		
	<b>Public Information Access</b>												
	▪ Multi-media CD					x	x						
	▪ National Parks Website									x	x		
	<b>Green Media</b>												
	▪ Green Journalist Club meetings			x			x			x			x
	▪ Feature Articles			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	▪ Media Monitoring	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	▪ Opinion Makers event							x					
	<b>Decision Makers</b>												
	▪ Decision Makers event at Parliament							x					
	▪ Decision makers field trips						x						x

**CRP 6      Public Awareness Campaign Implemented**

**6.1      Work with the “Green Media Machine”**

The second quarterly Meeting with the Club of “Green Journalists” was held on 1 October 2001.

Journalists from all Central Media covering environmental issues were invited. 20 of them participated. The list is attached as an Appendix.

Two of the members of the National Public Awareness Working Group – S. Aladjem and Katia Shavuleva took part. Kamelia Georgieva and Vladimir Chapkanski –Head of “Beli Iskar” section, Rila National Park, were guest presenters. The meeting focused on ecotourism pilots, and new park infrastructure.

***The agenda of the meeting:***

- ✓ Update – information and gratitude about the articles published and reports broadcast as a result of the first quarterly meeting on 31 July.
- ✓ Up date on the developments of the Rila Monastery Management Planing Process (The Workshop on 3-5 October). Results of the rapid ecological assessment and biodiversity conservation of the Rila monastery Nature Park. The scientific and socioeconomic information collected during the summer months will be assessed and shared with the central media in an appropriate form and way in next few weeks).



- ✓ News from the Parks: two eco-tourism “catalytic” events in Rila and Central Balkan.
- ✓ Presentation of the eco-tourism concept, work of the initiative groups and the opening of the new entrance points constructed in Rila NP.
- ✓ Ideas and suggestions for mass media coverage of the Ecotourism Initiative Group events AND the Rila Monastery management planning process? – Discussion of the journalists ideas and the opportunities for provoking analytical articles.

### **Materials Handed Out**

- ✓ Eco-tourism Concept Paper + Information about the two catalytic events.
- ✓ Leaflet about the Celebration of the Rila National Park entrance infrastructure
- ✓ Photocopies of the two articles published with support of the Project in the central press in August and September.

### **Media coverage:**

- ✓ seven articles in central daily newspapers were published as a result of the meeting (one of them in the one with biggest circulation - Trud).
- ✓ three radio interviews with K. G. and Vlady Chapkanski were broadcast by the Horizon Channel of the National Radio, Radio Bulgaria and Radio Express on the very day of the meeting.

## **6.2 Press Coverage (Articles) released with Project support**

A feature length article was produced by Vera Dacheva, a journalist from the weekly “Newspaper for the Women”, with Project support. The article is designed to focus on the work of the ecotourism initiative group in Kalofer’s pilot area and the new Park entrance points being constructed.

Two interviews with Nela Rachevits, Director of Central Balkan National Park were organized with Project support – one was broadcast by the Channel 1 of the National TV and the other one by “Hristo Botev” program of the National Radio. Both focused on the CB tenth anniversary.

As a consequence of the Project’s work with the “green journalists” a new column has appeared in the biggest women’s weekly newspaper. The chief editor of the “Newspaper for the Women” initiated a celebration of the International Day of the Animals in the country and started a Man and Nature column on Thursdays. It gives the Project and the National Parks an opportunity to publish news about their activities.

### **Meetings:**

Boiko Angelov, chef editor of “Newspaper for the Women” – 2

Vera Dacheva, of “Newspaper for the Women” – 2

Mariana Dimitrova, journalist from the Channel 1 of the National TV – 1

Maria Dimitrova, journalist from the Hristo Botev” program of the National Radio - 1

### **6.3 Central Media Coverage of Project's and Park's Events**

6 press releases have been produced and disseminated during this period:

- ✓ The work of the initiative group in Samokov pilot area - for the journalist tour to Samokov – handed out
- ✓ Ecotourism Pilot Projects and Catalytic Events– for the “green media machine” meeting on 1 October – handed out
- ✓ The event on Mecha Poliana, Maliovitsa – NP Rila on 6 October, disseminated through MOEW's channels and handed out at the event
- ✓ Central Balkan's NP tenth anniversary, Kalofer - 20 October - disseminated through MOEW's channels and handed out at the event
- ✓ Work of the Kalofer's ecotourism initiative group – handed out at the event in Kalofer
- ✓ CB NP opening of an exhibition (part of the celebration of the tenth anniversary) - disseminated through MOEW's channels and handed out at the event
- ✓ Educational Tour to USA – disseminated by the project

As a result of the Press Releases and Project's work with the “green media machine”, 17 articles were published in central newspapers. They are described in the October's Press Monitoring Report.

In addition to that 7 radio and TV interviews were broadcast:

- ✓ Interview with Kamelia Georgieva on Radio Express – 1 October 2.30 p. m.
- ✓ Interview with Kamelia Georgieva and Vladimir Chapkanski on Horizon Channel of the National Radio - 1 October 2 p.m.
- ✓ Report from the “green media journalist” meeting on Bulgaria Program of the National Radio - 2 October 11 a. m.
- ✓ Interview with Mimi Pramatarova on the Morning Show of the Channel 1 of the National TV - 5 October, 8.40 a. m.
- ✓ Interview with Nela Rachevitc on the Morning Show of the Channel 1 of the National TV 19 October, 8.30 a. m.
- ✓ Interview with Nela Rachevitc on the Hristo Botev Channel of the National Radio 19 October, 3.40 p. m.
- ✓ Interview with Kamelia Georgieva on The Night Show of Horizon Channel of the National Radio - 26 October 2 a.m.

### **6.4 Monthly press monitoring reports**

Three reports have been completed for the period in both English and Bulgarian.

### **6.5 Work on the Multimedia Presentation of the National Parks**

The Concept Paper has been shared and discussed with the Director of the Swiss supported Bulgarian Swiss Biodiversity Conservation Program, Rossen Vassilev. An agreement for co-production has been reached with him. Minister of Environment and Water, Arsenova's approval for the Concept and the production, was received through the Ministry's press officer.

#### *Work on the script.*

The first draft of the script was completed and given for translation in English and review by the PMU. Contributions to the script include members of the BSBCP, the three Park Directorates, the PMU, a specialist from the Executive Environment Agency, and three independent media and advertising consultant.

#### *Selection of images:*

- ✓ Ivan Kojuharov (Borrowed Nature NGO) has been assigned to coordinate the selection of images.
- ✓ The Project's Photo Archive was reviewed and qualitative images selected.
- ✓ Two Park Directorates submitted photographs from their archives.
- ✓ A CD with 18 minutes (a "wardrobe" of 50 files) of Moving Images from the parks was produced after a review and selection of episodes from 26 films from the "101 films about the biodiversity" Video Library. It will be used for the purposes of this and any future productions of CDs and Web sites of the National Parks.

#### *Selection of a producer:*

A pre-qualification letter of invitation was sent to nine companies. After review of their applications and the submitted samples of their products the short listed candidates will be invited to an interview. A Selection Committee will be formed consisting of the USAID and Swiss Projects and an independent consultant. They will award a tender contract based after a bidding conference and competitive bidding process.

### **6.6 White Brotherhood**

The Project helped Rila National Park Directorate to organize photojournalism activities in the Seven Lakes region, on August 18 and 19, 2001. Velin Javorski, journalist from the Bulgarian Army newspaper and a photographer from the same newspaper, completed an in-depth report and photo record of the White Brotherhood gathering and the activities of the National Park. As a result of their visit to the camp they produced 160 colored and black and white photographs of the camp and a journalist report on the gathering.

### **6.7 Rila Monastery Nature Park MP**

#### **Production of popular messages:**

A production of popular messages has started for the purposes of the public information campaign and in support of the management planning process. The information is developed for additional stages in the Rila Nature Park management planning effort. These support a press release, press conference, local/regional public information campaign, and (inter)national public information booklet on the values of the Nature Park.

***Work Plan Implications***      *None apart from public information activities dependent on the outcome of Rila Monastery Nature Park land ownership and management issues.*

## **4.0 Project Management and Administration**

### **4.1 Project Coordination and Supervision**

No extraordinary meetings for the Project Steering Committee were held during this quarter. Instead, three briefing meetings were organized and presented to the new Administration arising from national elections and new government formation in July.

- ✓ **September 12, 2001** Ecotourism Briefing for MOEW Minister Arsenova. Participants included Professor Don Hawkins, Jay Lee, Kamelia Georgieva and Peter Hetz.
- ✓ **September 13, 2001** Ecotourism Briefing for the Deputy Minister of Economy, Hadjinikolov. Participants: Dessislava Mihova, Tourism Assistant, Hawkins, Georgieva and Hetz.
- ✓ **September 13, 2001** Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Planning briefing for Deputy Minister of MOEW, Fehme Illiaz, and Deputy Minister of MOAF, M. Ploukchieva. Additional participation – D. Boteva and P. Hetz.
- ✓ **October 15, 2001** Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan Meeting with Deputy Minister of MOEW, Illiaz, Jay Lee, Environment Officer USAID, and P. Hetz.
- ✓ **October 26, 2001** USAID partners meeting, US Information Center – to discuss security and Mission Strategy development.

### **4.2 Project Staffing**

No changes to Project national staff are noted.

### **4.3 Office**

No changes to arrangements or temporary personnel noted..

### **4.4 Equipment**

6 Trimble Global Positioning System (GPS) units were purchased this reporting period. These units are the basis for field-based data collection of a wide variety of national park management components (e.g. ecological monitoring, trail system, NTNR assessment; infrastructure location and development; etc.) all linked to each Parks GIS.

### **4.5 International Technical Assistance**

**Dr. Steve Dennison**, key personnel to the BCEG Project under the functional labor category for Environmental Policy Specialist, conducted his second consulting visit during the period. Dr. Dennison completed another 21 days of his assignment. He has now completed 42.6 days of his total LOE of 60 days. Dr. Dennison was in Bulgaria from September 29- October 20, 2001

**Professor Donald Hawkins**, key personnel to the BCEG Project under the functional labor category for Ecotourism Specialist, completed another 11 days of his total LOE of 54 days. A total of 21 days have been completed, leaving a balance of 33 days.

He visited Bulgaria from September 9-18, 2001. The BCEG Project will be seeking approval of another 10-12 days of consulting work focused in the United States over the next quarter.

**Mr. Jared Hardner**, key personnel to the BCEG Project under the functional labor category for Business Development Specialist, completed his second visit to Bulgaria between October 23, and November 1, 2001. His second assignment used a total of 22 days. A balance of 28 days remains on his total LOE of 60 days.

#### **4.6 National Technical Assistance**

A total of more than 141 person days has been used during this reporting period.

- Rila Monastery Nature Park - 4 members of the CPT - 60 person days.
- Media and Marketing Specialist – *Plamen Vulchev* - 20 days
- Ecotourism Intermittent consultant – *Nelli Georgieva* - 20 days
- Ecotourism Consultant – *D. Filipova* - 17 days
- Leg Advisor – *V. Petrova*, 1.62 days of consulting on behalf of the ecotourism initiative group of Kalofer;
- GIS Advisor – *I. Kountchev* - 7.5 days of service;
- NTNR intermittent consultant – *C. Gushev* - 15 days.

#### **4.7 Purchase Orders**

The following professional services contracts (purchase orders) were issued in favor of:

<b>Contractor/Grantee</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Date</b>
Institute of Botany	REA – Rila Monastery Nature Park	August
Analytical Creative Group	Rapid Socio-Economic assessment	August
Advertising Agency D/Art	Reproduction and printing of Park Management Plans	August
Production Center Ltd.	1. Rila Monastery Postcards;	August
	2. Amendment to technical Supervision of Graphic elements of Rila National Park tourist infrastructure;	Sept.
	3. Amendment to Kalofer Tourist infrastructure Purchase Order;	Sept.
Geohide Ltd	Georeference Coordinate system for Rila and Central Balkan National Parks	August
Pro GIS	Coverter Software for AutoCad LDD to FRZ-EF formats	October

#### **4.8 International Training and Workshop Events - Ecotourism Study Tour (TRANSIT GRANT) of 12 participants, commenced in early November.**

**4.9 International Travel** - Nelli Georgieva – Intermittent Consultant and Ecotourism Initiative Group Facilitator traveled to the United States with the TRANSIT Grant Ecotourism Study Tour in early November. The BCEG Project paid her costs.

Maurice Waterhouse, volunteer consultant and biodiversity expert, traveled from the UK to participate in the Rila Monastery Nature Park Rapid assessment analysis workshop in early October. Mr. Waterhouse had been a summer volunteer on the REA for Rila Monastery, representing the taxa, *insecta*, and providing assistance with assessing ecological conditions of the territory. Mr. Waterhouse's airfare was paid by the Project.

**4.10 Networking and Partnerships**

International Donors

Project coordination with UNDP continues relative to three of their biodiversity support activities:

- ✓ Finalization of the UNDP capacity building needs assessment (of which the CHM report has been a component)
- ✓ An assessment of opportunities for financial incentives as tools in biodiversity conservation outside of Protected areas; and
- ✓ GEF Project developments in the Rhodopes;

Coordination with BSBCP continued primarily on matters related to Pirin National Park Management plan development, and the national parks multi-media CD.

At the request of USAID, the BCEG Project/ARD provided guidance and advice to the World Bank Nutrient Reduction and Wetland Restoration Project along the Danube. Specific advice was given on the conduct of a livelihood assessment related to biodiversity conservation, local subsistence activities, and alternative income generation possibilities arising from Project interventions. ARD-USA supplied the World Bank with an international consultant for a period of 21 days. The consultant was supervised by the PCU of the MOEW, and a final report is available from the Bank's office in Sofia. The World Bank GEF Project continues to seek USAID co-financing for this Project.

Government Policy and NGOS

The PMU spent considerable time (between 20-25 person days) in tracking and monitoring changes to evolving environmental legislation. Specifically the Project is reviewing revisions to the Environment Protection Act (framework environmental legislation), the Biodiversity Conservation Act, and the Concessions Act. All three policy pieces have a direct and immediate impact on national parks, and results associated with this Project.

In addition, the Team Leader has attended several readings and discussion of the draft laws at the Parliamentary Commission on Environment and Water. He has also introduced the Project and its concerns related to pending legislation to the Head of the Parliamentary Commission, Dr. D. Charkarov.

The Project continues to coordinate its feedback and issues on environmental legislation with a working group of environmental NGOS.

## ***APPENDICES***

## **Appendix 1.**

**Letter by Deputy Minister Ploukchieva, (MOAF) regarding a Rila  
Monastery Nature Park meeting  
and  
Holy Synod reply to the Project efforts to engage them in the Plan process**



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS

Outgoing No 9200-4664  
9.10.2001

To: Mr. Peter Hetz  
Leader of BCEG Project

Re: Rila Monastery Nature Park Management plan

Dear Mr. Hetz,

With this letter I inform you that on the 28.09.2001 in Rila monastery a meeting with the participation of Joan – Rila monastery abbot, Mr. Mehmed Dikme – Minister of agriculture and forests, Mrs. Arsenova – minister of environment and water, eng. Dr. Meglena Plugchieva and Mr. Nahit Kabil – deputy ministers of agriculture and forests took place.

During the meeting problems regarding restitution, management of forests owned by the monastery and conservation of their unique biodiversity were discussed. Particular attention was paid to the Rila monastery NP Management plan that is being developed with the support of the lead by you Project.

Taking into consideration the fact that Rila monastery is a major owner of lands and forests on the park's territory the leaders of the two institutions and the abbot agreed that Mr. Plamen Ianlazov – juridical advisor of the monastery is going to be representative of the Monastery in the management plan development working group.

Respectfully:  
Deputy minister /signed, stamped/  
M. Plugchieva

Received 11.10.2001

## **Bulgarian Patriarchy – Holy Synod**

Ref: 1331      extracted from a protocol of 25 July 2001 (attached)  
16 Nov 2001  
Sofia

To : Mr. Peter Hetz – ARD  
Team Leader of the PMU BCEG Project

Copy:  
The Abbot of the Rila Saint Cloister  
Dragovit Bishop John

Dear Mr. Hetz,

The Holy Synod, at its session in full participation- Protocol No: 42/25.07.2001 had acquainted in details with your letter, our ref: 858/ 09.05.2001 – regarding information for development of Management plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park and a request the Holy Synod to appoint two representatives, which to participate from the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church party, to cooperate and participate in the on-going process of the development of the Management Plan of the Rila Monastery Nature Park.

The Holy Synod, as it studied the presented in your letter facts, have taken into consideration as your attention and your respect to the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, the Rila Monastery and its ownership, as well as your wish through the addressed invitation to provide adequate representation of the interests of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, stresses with deep regret the fact that not yet are restored entirely the real estate of the Rila monastery and thus not were restored fully the rights of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, on its property, and to the present time is impossible its adequate presence and representation as a full owner of the mentioned by you initiative. Precisely, due to this reason, the Holy Synod is not able satisfy your request, and cannot appoint its representatives, which fully to present and stand the interests of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church in such a serious initiative, as the preparation of the Management Plan of the Rila Monastery Management Plan. The present, requires a concentration of opportunities and efforts for the restoration of the ownership of the Rila Holy Cloister and only afterward the positive solution of this important matter, will be possible eventual new review of the reflected in your kind letter opportunity.

Attachment:  
Fragment Copy of the Holy Synod Decision  
From its session in full participation – Protocol 42/ 25.07.2001

With respect: For the Bulgarian Patriarchy – Holy Synod  
Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod – Archimandrite Boris /signed, stamped/

Copy – Fragment  
Of Protocol – 42/ 25.07.2001  
Of a session of the Holy Synod  
In full participation  
Under a report of the head of section  
Church property to the Holy synod.

6. The holy synod has heard a letter – Ref: 858/09.05.2001 from Mr. Peter Hetz – ARD and Tem Leader of PMU of the BCEG Project, regarding: Preparation of a Management Plan of Rila Monastery Nature Park, with request – the Holy Synod to appoint two representatives, which on behalf of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, to participate and to assist in the reparation process of the Management Plan of Rila Monastery Nature Park. The request is based on the on-going process of the development of the Management Plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park, having in mind the ownership – restored and non-restored yet for the Rila Monastery, as well as the centennial historical presence and huge influence of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church in the treated by the particular plan territories with the purpose to provide adequate representation of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church interests in these initiatives. The Holy Synod, after getting acquainted and reviewed in details Mr. Hetz's letter, after carefully studying the presented facts and information, and has taken in consideration with regret the fact that, despite all efforts, not yet are restored the Rila monastery lands and thus are not restored entirely and fully, the rights of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, over its property, the due to these reasons in impossible its full, decent and dignitary presence and representation as a full owner of the treated territories,

DECIDED:

The Holy Synod, marking the attention and the respect shown by Mr. Hetz, as well the importance of the raised by him questions with letter No: 858/09.05.2001, regretfully underlines the fact, that the traditional and doubtless ownership of the Holy Rila Cloister still not is restored and due to this serious reason, the Holy Synod is not able to satisfy Mr. Hetz's request, as is unable to appoint its representatives, representing with dignity and standing for the interests of the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, in a such serious initiative as the Management Plan for Rila Monastery Nature Park development. The present, requires a concentration of opportunities and efforts for the restoration of the ownership of the Rila Holy Cloister and only afterward the positive solution of this important matter, will be possible eventual new review of the reflected in your kind letter opportunity.

True Copy  
Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod – Archimandrite Boris /signed , stamped/

**Appendix 2.**

**Presentation: Renewable Resource Management and Economic  
Development Options for National Parks in Bulgaria  
October 2001**

**Jared Hardner**

# Renewable Resource Management for National Parks in Bulgaria: Development of a Strategy and Management Options

Jared Hardner

Enterprise Development Specialist

*Hardner & Gullison Associates, LLC*

*October 30, 2001*

# Objectives

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- Improve renewable resource management in National Parks (berries, herbs, mushrooms)
- Stimulate economic development in regions surrounding the parks

# Observations

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- Blueberries are important source of revenue for local communities
- Industry is competitive
  - Pricing appears fair and *efficient*
- Current regulatory system does not manage impacts



# Observations: Parks Finance

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- Economic benefits of park management exceed costs
  - National Parks Management Cost (2001)
    - 1,000,000 leva
  - Value of Blueberries *alone* from National Parks to Bulgarian Economy (2001)
    - 1,200,000 to 2,500,000 leva





# Observations: Blueberry Supply Chain

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	<i>Sale Price (leva)</i>	<i>Revenue Margin</i>
<i>Collector</i>	1.8 – 2.5	$\leq 2.5$
<i>Buyer</i>	1.9 – 2.7	$\leq 0.9$
<i>Processor</i>	2.5 – 5.0	$\leq 2.3$
<i>Exporter</i>	2.8 – 5.0	$\leq 2.5$

# Observations: Current Regulatory System

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- Current permit system is flawed
  - Unregulated personal collection offers loophole for commercial collection
  - Low participation in permit system
    - Permit Fees Collected for Blueberries (2001)
      - Rila National Park = 407 leva
      - Central Balkan National Park = 2,650 leva
  - No control of collection areas or intensity



# Analysis: Economic Benefits

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- Economic benefits maximized when:
  - Sustainable access ensured to communities
  - Economic value of product remains in local communities
  - Private investment is attracted to communities



# Analysis: Ecological Management

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- Ecological management improved when:
  - Collectors participate in regulatory system
  - Management burden is shared by commercial operators
  - Park management controls areas, timing, and intensity
  - Management based on science



# Proposal

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Ecological and economic objectives can be met by implementing two changes to resource management in national parks:

- Permits for Personal Collection
- Commercial Contracts





# Management Proposal 1: Personal Collection Permits

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- Should control
  - Time of collection
  - Intensity of collection
  - Area of collection
- Should provide
  - Easy access by collectors to park
  - Easy acquisition of permits
  - Low or no cost to collectors



# Management Proposal 2: Commercial Contracts

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- Should control
  - Overall health of ecosystem and collected resources
    - Performance Bonds
- Should provide
  - Basis for business investment in local communities
    - Allocation based on proposals for local investment and employment
  - Fair, competitive, transparent allocation
  - Continued access to park by individual collectors



# *Adaptive* Management

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- Scientific monitoring should determine how much management is required
  - Monitoring should be continuous and data re-analyzed every year to provide dynamic perspective of management results
- Both permit and contract system can always be adjusted to management needs
  - Area, intensity, and timing of harvest all easily modified each collection season



# Next Steps

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- Continue ecological risk assessment
- Determine whether revenue system requires revision
  - More effective
  - Less burden to Park Directorate
  - Equitable
- Select management options, *if required*
  - Permits: manage ecological impact
  - Contracts: manage ecological impact, increase fee revenue, stimulate local investment
  - Systems can be introduced in a simple form, and made more complex with time





ARD - Bulgaria  
Biodiversity Conservation &  
Economic Growth  
Project  
Sponsored by  
USAID and the Government of Bulgaria

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---

## **Ecotourism Study Tour to Tennessee, USA November 3-17, 2001**

### **List of participants:**

1. Rayna Hardalova – Ministry of Environment and Water
2. Dessislava Mihalkova – Ministry of Economy, Department of Tourism
3. Petya Kovacheva – Central Balkan National Park Directorate
4. Stefan Kirilov – Rila National Park Directorate
5. Nanko Minkov – Section head – Central Balkan National Park
6. Vladimir Chapkunski - Section head – Rila National Park
7. Hristo Konyarski – private business, horse riding services - Rila National Park
8. Radka Moskova - private business, computer center - Rila National Park
9. Ivan Stoynev - private business, hotel keeper - Rila National Park
10. Donka Ivanova – mayor's office Kalofer - Central Balkan National Park
11. Dobrinka Tsutsova - private business, hotel keeper - Central Balkan National Park
12. Toncho Tonchev – Kalofer mountain guide group - Central Balkan National Park

Representative of ARD – Nely Georgieva - ecotourism consultant

## Ecotourism Study Tour to Tennessee, USA

### 1. Training subject:

To address Strategic Objective #: **4.1 Special initiatives:** The Special Initiatives activity portfolio addresses the immediate needs of the country and contributes to promoting stability in the region by providing support to unique programs not sufficiently advanced by any other Strategic Objective.

As a result of the training, participants are expected to work towards the following goals as outlined in their action plans:

- Identify stakeholders and explore their respective roles in developing local sustainable ecotourism activities (such as the State government, the Department of Tourism Development, the National Park Service, local communities, tourism associations, and private businesses).
- Learn about and understand the policy and practice of the collaboration between the local communities, small businesses, and the State Department of Tourism in Tennessee.
- Learn strategies for developing enhanced local ecotourism around the national parks.

### 2. Program dates: November 3 – 17, 2001

### 3. Training Outline

#### **Saturday, Nov. 3**

***--Travel from Sofia, Bulgaria to Dulles, DC--***

#### Flight Schedule:

Lufthansa #LH3513

Depart Sofia: 07:15

Arrive Munich: 08:20

Lufthansa #LH9280

Depart Munich: 11:45

Arrive Dulles DC: 15:20

Directions: Richard Davis and George Bowen meet group upon arrival. Accompany to hotel.

#### Accommodations:

George Washington University Inn

821 New Hampshire Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20037

Tel: (202) 337-6620

Toll free: 1-800-426-4455

Fax: (202)298-7499

PM Rest.

Evening walking tour of Lincoln Memorial and other sights on the Mall, with Richard Davis as tour guide.

**Sunday, Nov. 4**

Rest. Recommend tour of Washington, DC. Smithsonian Institution buildings, National Archives, other locations.

**Monday, Nov. 5**

9:00 WL orientation

George Washington U. Day with Dr. Donald Dawkins. Mr. Bowen and Mr. Davis attend, to insure program continuity.

**Tuesday, Nov. 6**

AM Introduction to UT program.

Action Plans George Bowen and Richard Davis

Introduction of the needs assessment/action planning process, either based upon discussions at The George Washington University, or upon brief presentations from participants on their home situation.

Intro to Web Board follow-on activity

Visit Department of Interior (NPS) National Park Service Role of NPS; relationship with State and local organizations. Working with private sector in and around national parks. Efforts to encourage eco-tourism, and cut down overcrowding/ strain on natural settings and protected, sensitive areas.

Return to Knoxville.

**Flight Schedule:**

United Airlines #UA7345

Depart DC Dulles 17:15

Arrive Knoxville 18:45

**Directions:** Met and transported to lodging by UT staff.

Walking tour of area around hotel; if time is available, brief driving tour of Knoxville.

**Accommodations:**

Days Inn Campus Hotel.

Address: 1706 W. Cumberland Ave.

Knoxville, TN 37916

Tel: (865) 521-5000

Fax: (865) 540-3866

Evening: Reception at home of program coordinator, R. Davis

**Wednesday, Nov. 7**

AM Brief UT Orientation to daily life in Knoxville. Banking (if necessary).

Overview: Tourism/Ecotourism Development

George Bowen

Tourism Development in the sub-region: Cocke County, Tenn.

Eric Ogle --How local tourism councils work. Relationship between public and private sectors. Funding issues for rural county tourism activities.

PM Assessing Natural & Cultural Resources for Sustainable Development  
G. Bowen

### **Thursday, Nov. 8**

AM Visit local office of Tennessee Department of Tourism Development  
Meet with Lee Curtis and Agnes Gorham, Regional Directors –  
Tourism marketing concepts: the Tennessee History, Music, and Craft trails. State government efforts to encourage tourism development: matching grants programs.

11:30 Travel to Morristown, TN. Lunch in Morristown, a stop on the Tennessee Heritage Trail. Tourism based upon history and culture, marketed to people drawn to the Upper East Tennessee region by location between Smoky Mountains and Cumberland Mountains.

PM Meet with tourism organization. Visit community craft center (Rose Center). Discuss craft festival organization and management.

Travel to Jonesborough, TN.

15:00 Visitors' Center. Meet with Ms. Claudia Moody, North East Tennessee Tourism Association. Organizing a festival with a cultural/historical theme (National Storytelling Festival)

17:00 Return to Knoxville

### **Friday, Nov 9**

8:15 How people spend their money in ecotourism activities in the region. Report of a study in a 26-county area in Western North Carolina.  
Dr. Susan Smith, currently Ass't Prof., Health and Safety Sciences, UT, Former Community Development Specialist, and Associate Director, Mountain Resources Center, Western Carolina University.

9:40 Depart for Cosby, TN. Located in a rural area in the shadow of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the Appalachian Trail. Discussions with Director of Tourism, Cocke County and others at the Community Center, including the organization of a cooperative for marketing of a popular hand-made craft item—quilts. Also, visit shops where another local popular hand-made craft item—dulcimers—are manufactured and sold.

14:00 Participate in Ecotourism adventure: Rafting on Pigeon River  
*Please note that normal rafting season ends in October. Rafting requires release of water by TVA; in November, the TVA will not guarantee sufficient water on the rivers in the area. Should rafting on the Big Pigeon River be unavailable, the Outpost Ranch director will offer a 10-kilometer hike on the Appalachian Trail, another standard activity at the Ranch.*

Check into the French Broad (River) Outpost Ranch (“the ranch”) in Del Rio, TN, a commercial “dude” ranch aimed at the eco-tourism trade.

Evening entertainment at the ranch and/or nearby Front Porch Restaurant, which features local bluegrass music and dancing.

Overnight at the Ranch.

### **Sat, Nov. 10**

Horseback riding at the French Broad Outpost Ranch.

Meals as provided as part of the “all-inclusive package” at the Ranch.

Continue activities at the Ranch, including discussion with owner regarding the establishment and management of his business.

Overnight at the Ranch.

### **Sunday, Nov. 11**

Survey Assessment of goods, services and facilities by participants using exit survey tools developed in Bulgaria.

Return to Knoxville.

Attend the (Smoky Mountain) *Foothills Craft Guild* Craft show.

Meet with organizers to discuss organization, sponsorship, and management of the show. Discuss value of show to local community.

Evening reception at the home of UT faculty member.

*Program presenters, university and community members involved with and interested in Bulgaria and ecotourism will be invited for informal interaction. Invitees include Brig. Gen. Fred Forster, Chief of Staff of Tenn. Air National Guard and CEO of Blount County Chamber of Commerce. Gen. Forster was a leader in developing Partnership for Peace link between Bulgaria and the state of Tennessee.*

### **Monday, Nov. 12**

8:30 Depart for Great Smoky Mountains National Park

9:45 Arrive at Park

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in US; between 10 and 11 million visitors each year. Meet with US Park Service managers to discuss development and management of activities within and near the park.

12:30 Telephone call to WL, lunch

14:00 Tour Pigeon Forge, a Smoky Mountains gateway community

Discussions with Sevier County Tourism Bureau on development in gateway communities. Dependence on Park, and development of independent attractions such as discount shopping and craft industry development which have transformed Pigeon Forge into a year-round tourist destination.

Visit shopping mall.

Return to Knoxville

**Tuesday, Nov. 13**

7:30 Depart for Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The Cove, a very popular tourist destination within the national park, is noted for wildlife viewing opportunities (mostly white-tailed deer, birds and small mammals, but also occasional bears). Also known for its beautiful natural vistas and for the preserved buildings of the former residents in the Cove. Early departure from the hotel to maximize wildlife viewing potential.

Accompanied by Mr. Herb Handly, Exec. VP of Tourism, Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau (Blount County tourism).

Experience Your Smoky Mountains Community Organization which connects political and business leaders surrounding the park to the management issues of the park.

Continue to Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association, Englewood, TN.

Multi-county, regional non-profit organization to promote ecotourism. Meet with leaders to discuss community organization for tourism and economic development. Grants and other funding mechanisms. Cooperation between private and public sectors. Marketing of eco-tourism opportunities.

Evening: Continue to Fall Creek Falls State Park, Tennessee's premier state park.

The state's largest and best park, comprising 19,500 acres, Fall Creek Falls State Park features a lodge, a resort inn, conference meeting facility, camping, picnic areas, visitors center, swimming and boating, hiking trails, tennis courts and golf.

Overnight stay in lodge.

Meet at dinner with community leaders from nearby community to discuss how the local community has been able to capitalize its location near the park. Advantages, problems associated with location.

**Accommodations:**

Fall Creek Falls State Park Inn.

Rte. 3, Box 300

Pikeville, TN 37367

Tel: 423-881-5241; reservations line: 1-800-250-8610

**Wednesday, Nov. 14**

AM Tour of park, park services. Challenges in developing and maintaining park services.

Drive to Nashville

PM Lee Curtis, Tennessee Heritage and Community Development, arranging State of Tennessee meetings and schedule. Includes meeting at the Tennessee State Capitol with formal greeting by State of Tennessee. Ceremonies and photos publicity opportunity.

During their visit to Nashville, the group will meet with members of the Tennessee Partnership for Peace (Tennessee National Guard). Time to be determined. The Partnership program, established by Gen. Colin Powell in the early 1990's, paired State National Guard organizations with former member nations of the Warsaw Pact. Tennessee's partner is Bulgaria. It was under the auspices of the Partnership that a

Tennessee delegation, including members of Tennessee state government, visited Bulgaria in October, 2000.

Overnight in Nashville

Accommodations:

Drury Inn  
341 Harding Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37211  
Tel: (615) 834-7170

**Thursday, Nov. 15**

AM Meet with Tennessee Department of Tourism Development, and others as arranged by Ms. Curtis. Includes Mr. Alton Kelly, Maury County Convention and Visitors Bureau, who will talk about his experience with Heritage Trail tourism.

We anticipate, in addition, following up on the state grants program, as well as connections between National, state, and private sectors. Avenues and obstacles to twinning programs.

PM Return to Knoxville

**Friday, Nov. 16**

AM Wrap-up discussion.  
Web Board session with Eric Ogle  
Continue working on Action Plans.

PM Completion and Presentation of Action Plans  
WL and UT evaluations

Evening: Farewell and certificate award dinner.

**Saturday, Nov 17**      *Departure Day*      *--Travel from Knoxville to Dulles, DC --*

Please advise the participants that they should plan to arrive at the airport at least two hours before their international flight is scheduled to depart.

Flight Schedule:

United Airlines #UA7342  
Depart Knoxville                      11:15  
Arrive Dulles, DC                      12:45

Lufthansa #LH9281  
Depart Dulles, DC                      17:55

**Sunday, Nov 18**

Arrive Munich                      08:00+1

Lufthansa #LH3502  
Depart Munich                      11:00  
Arrive Sofia                      14:00





ARD-Bulgaria  
**Biodiversity Conservation &  
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**Concept Paper**  
*Desired Characteristics for a National Parks Funding Mechanism*

**INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this concept paper is to describe a financial mechanism that will be appropriate for the long-term funding of Bulgaria's National Parks, and to determine if this is consistent with the capabilities of the existing National Trust EcoFund. To the extent possible, we attempt to provide specific details about the desired functionality of this *National Parks Fund*.

The intention of the National Parks Fund is to devise a secure funding mechanism that can replace the Bulgarian **National Environment Protection Fund (NEPF)** as a source of ongoing park assistance in the event that its operation ceases as a condition of Bulgaria's accession into the European Union. The current role of the (NEPF) in parks funding is to provide a source of investment capital and infrastructure development grants – expenses that are not provided for in the annual operations budget for the parks.

**CONTEXT**

National Park Directorates in Bulgaria have only recently been designated as regional institutions under the Bulgarian Protected Areas Act (1998). In FY 2000, National Parks operating costs became part of the Ministry of Environment and Waters annual budget allocation. The three national parks in Bulgaria presently have an annual operations costs in the region of one million Bulgarian leva. Any additional capital or infrastructure investment in National Parks comes from two additional sources – the NEPF, and bilateral/multilateral sources. The NEPF is guided by a regulatory framework and organizational structure as laid down in the Environment Protection Act (94/96/97/98/99). A new version of this Act is presently being developed.

The future of the NEPF is presently insecure. Largely capitalized from taxes, fees, fines and levies applied to polluters, the Fund's use have been scrutinized and contested. The National Accounting Office has conducted a recent review of the Fund's operations and strategic application. The NEPFund's future remains unknown.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIONAL PARKS FUND

### *Objective*

The Fund should be a stable source of money for parks infrastructure and development capital that is **additional** to the operational expenses of the parks. Operational costs should remain a budgetary responsibility of the Government of Bulgaria (GOB).

Park infrastructure and capital development needs include, but are not limited to:

- Improving and managing visitor access and distribution, and that limit impacts arising from park visitation;
- Tourist information, education and interpretation aides (e.g. signage);
- Tourist management facilities and services (e.g. sanitary facilities and waste management);
- financial lending assistance to eco-tourism operators for goods and services operating in support of park management objectives;
- public information and awareness materials;
- conservation education programs; and,
- human resource development (e.g. training for rangers and park management).

The fund should provide assistance in three forms: **a)** grants to the Parks Directorate; **b)** payment to private contractors for goods and services; **c)** low-interest loans to private sector operators whose business relates to Bulgaria's National Parks.

### *Governance*

- The Fund should be a non-governmental organization that is privately managed. A Board of Directors selects the manager of the fund.
- The Board of Directors includes donors that provide ten percent or more of monies expended in that year, and a representative of the Parks Directorate;
- The Fund should convene an advisory board composed of mayors of municipalities surrounding the parks and private-sector representatives from industries associated with the National Parks. Membership in the advisory board should be voluntary and open to all interested parties. The Advisory Board should have no voting power, but rather serve to provide feedback and guidance on Fund management decisions.
- The Fund must have specific expenditure priorities identified in its charter. No funds should be allocated for other purposes until the fund fulfills those basic priorities on an annual basis.

### *Funding*

- The Fund should be able to receive monies from various sources, including but not limited to: the National Environment Protection Fund; multi-lateral donors; foreign private foundations; interest on loans; and, national revenue generation programs for the National Parks Fund (e.g. fees paid by tourism operations associated with the parks).
- The Fund should be capable of administering monies received as either "pass-through" or endowments. The total administrative expense of the Fund should not exceed fifteen percent of monies allocated in each fiscal year, as a maximum.
- The Fund should not require a specific size in order to operate, but the financial objective of the fund is to achieve a sufficient size to guarantee that the needs of the Bulgarian National Parks, beyond operations, are met on a consistent basis.
- The target for *minimum* annual grants and loans from the Fund is **one million leva**. The endowment target to ensure this annual allocation is achieved is 20 million leva, assuming an endowment expenditure rate of five percent of corpus (1 million leva / 0.05).

***Performance Requirements***

- The fund should be capable of meeting administrative and auditing norms for each donor specified above.
- The fund should provide specific performance metrics for grant and loan recipients, related to: a) project implementation milestones; and, b) environmental impact guidelines.
- The fund should develop performance metrics for achieving its own overall objectives of providing effective assistance to Bulgaria's National Parks. Progress towards these objectives should be measured on an annual basis, be made available to donors and the public in the form of an annual report, and be independently verified.

**NEXT STEPS**

ARD requests that the National Trust ecoFund assess whether the National Parks Fund described in this memorandum could be implemented within the current legal structure of the ecoFund. A detailed response, outlining the legal and practical opportunities and constraints, will greatly facilitate any actions by ARD to influence creation of such a Fund.



**ARD - Bulgaria**  
**Biodiversity Conservation &  
 Economic Growth  
 Project**  
*Sponsored by  
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55 Parchevich Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 1000 Sofia

tel./fax: (+359 2) 986 7418; 986 3686; 986 3846; 980 7240

**List of participants in the informal media meeting  
 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2001  
 Re: Ecotourism; celebrations of the both parks**

1.	Angel Bogdanov	Tryd newspaper, annex Sofianets	
2.	Lev Kokyshkin	Pari + newspaper	943 36 64, 943 36 65 fax
3.	Olia Stoianova	Dnevnik newspaper	
4.	Rosa Damianova	BNR Christo Botev	
5.	Petar Zekov	Cash newspaper	971 23 79
6.	Tania Georgieva	Radio Express	
7.	Iavorski	Bulgarian Army	
8.	Miglena Gergova	Eko sviat magazine	
9.	Slaviana Manolova	Weekly Tryd newspaper	
10.	Tsanka Misheva	National Radio	
11.	Dolores Vitanova	Democracy newspaper	
12.	Rumiana Panaiotova	BNR	
13.	Maya Kalpachka	BTA	926 22 25
14.	Daniel Dimitrov	BTA	926 22 25, 088 86 10 76
15.	Maria Dimitrova	Radion Bulgaria	987 0303
16.	Radostina Biliarska	BNR Horizon	
17.	Maria Dimitrova	Zemia newspaper	944 25 51
18.	Marsela Stoianova	Tryd newspaper	
19.	Todor Pitovski	BNT Morning block	
20.	Mariana Dimitorva	BNT, Channel 1 Morning block	